35th Annual Report 2009 - 2010

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

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Chair's Report

Honourable Doug Horner, Deputy Premier and
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology
324 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Horner:

On behalf of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) and in accordance with ACAT's terms of reference, I have the honour of providing you with the 35th ACAT Annual Report for the year ending March 31, 2010.

Alberta's post-secondary institutions remain strongly committed to Alberta's transfer system. In alignment with Campus Alberta objectives, ACAT strives to increase learners' access and mobility within the advanced education system. In doing so, ACAT aims to create more flexible learning opportunities while providing learners with necessary tools for success in their chosen learning path. Council's work concerns matters that will assist learners in their quest for lifelong learning. The Annual Report showcases the post-secondary institutions' willingness to cooperate and collaborate for the benefit of the learner.

Council has unanimously adopted a new competency-based governance model which will include representation from all the public post-secondary sectors, Aboriginal institutions, the public and students. Our new governance model aligns Council with the requirements of the Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (APAGA). This alignment with APAGA will serve to strengthen our role in Campus Alberta while reinforcing our commitment to learners and respecting the roles of institutions.

Alberta's transfer system is continuously growing--there are currently 29,800 active and 45,700 grandfathered trasnfer agreements contained in the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The success and growth of transfer in Alberta are largely results of the efforts of our network of Contact Persons which include a representative from each of the 36 postsecondary institutions.

To enhance developments within existing collaborative relationships, ACAT continues to work toward expanding the number of articulation committees in Alberta. Articulation committees are an important vehicle in maintaining collegial relationships and enhancing communication between institutions to facilitate greater integration within the transfer system.

Implementation of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's *Advancing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Alberta: an Action Plan* is well underway. Activities have included: completing an environmental scan, establishing a PLAR Stakeholder Committee, offering professional development opportunities, developing standard PLAR-related terminology and definitions, and securing approval for a new policy statement for reporting PLAR credits through the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System. The second year of PLAR implementation promises to be equally productive.

On behalf of ACAT, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the post-secondary institutions that are part of Alberta's transfer system as they continue to explore means of facilitating smooth student mobility. I would also like to thank the Ministry for the support provided by the Secretariat and the department. I look forward to ensuring that ACAT is an important cornerstone of Campus Alberta.

Sincerely,

Ron Woodward
Chair

ACAT Strategic Direction 2009 - 2010

Vision

In matters of admissions, transfer credit, and the recognition of prior learning, Alberta's post-secondary institutions cooperate to provide a transfer system that is responsive to the needs of learners.

Mission

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to support the evolution of Campus Alberta by acting as both an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer, and catalyst for beneficial change.

ACAT also plays an active role in the implementation of these policies through monitoring, facilitation, and research. Council is responsible for facilitating improvement in relationship development and communication among all institutions regarding issues of admission and transfer credit.

To fulfill its mission, ACAT is engaged in the following activities:

Leadership
- Including the formation of best practices, policies, and procedures within which effective transitions and prior learning assessment and recognition are supported

Communication
- Including continuous improvement of communication on matters of admissions and transfers

Publications:
- Including a Business Plan, Newsletters, and the annual Transfer Patterns Report.
- Maintenance of the *official Online Alberta Transfer Guide* and the production and distribution of the printed annual *Alberta Transfer Guide*

Mediation:
- Serving the best interests of learners

Applied Research:
- Relating to the admission and transfer of learners throughout the Alberta Transfer System
- Participating in Pan-Canadian research projects

Highlights from Strategic Priorities

ACAT has identified strategic priorities to respond to the significant opportunities and challenges to achieve its goals and strategies for 2009-2012.

The strategic priorities described below were identified as key tasks for Council over the past year, in addition to the important ongoing core businesses of ACAT.

Campus Alberta

ACAT has positioned itself to further Advanced Education and Technology's vision of the Campus Alberta model. ACAT institution membership is broader than Alberta's six-sector model, including representation from all public post-secondary sectors in Alberta, Aboriginal colleges and some out of province institutions.

This representation across the post-secondary system ensures that ACAT is able to maintain the needs of all Alberta learners as primary concerns. The breadth of Alberta's Transfer System coupled with ACAT's new competency based governance model further aligns ACAT with the vision of Campus Alberta. With this alignment, ACAT is able to take a leadership role in enhancing the concept of Campus Alberta while also ensuring that a learner-centred approach is prioritized.

Career Laddering

As Albertans pursue career paths that necessitate further learning, more progression opportunities-such as block transfer agreements would provide expanded opportunities for career laddering between certificate, diploma, and degree programs.

To recognize the benefits of career laddering, ACAT contracted Environics Research Group to conduct a disciplined, well-grounded, and in-depth best practices study of learner progression

practices in Alberta.

Environics reviewed background research, existing case studies, and consulted with learners. The research identified the challenges and opportunities that increased transfer options offer, and also established best practices. ACAT is further examining how to apply the final report's best practices in an effort to expand the transfer options available to Alberta's learners.

Articulation Committees

Alberta's Transfer System is built upon collaborative relationships between post-secondary institutions. Articulation committees represent one mechanism used to foster a collaborative environment. Articulation committees are designed to bring together faculty and faculty heads from ACAT member institutions to develop collegial relationships and enhance communication between institutions. As Alberta's system relies on collaboration among institutions, developing and enhancing the relationships between institutions facilitates greater integration within the transfer system.

Recognizing the value of and opportunity created by articulation committees, ACAT established a sub-committee to develop a new articulation model that would allow for the expansion of the number of committees in Alberta. Council has endorsed the implementation of new articulation committees in the areas of English, Business, and Child and Youth Care. Additionally, ACAT is working with the Aboriginal member institutions and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) to establish an aboriginal education articulation committee specifically designed to strengthen relationships between aboriginal institutions and the broader system.

In addition to articulation committees, occasionally articulation task groups are formed to address issues which are time-sensitive and require recommendations to the Ministry. Two articulation task groups, Nursing and Engineering Technology, were formed at the request of the Ministry to address transferability issues. The Nursing Task Group examined transferability between Licensed Practical Nurse diploma programs and Registered Nurse degree programs and among the degree programs. The Nursing Task Group completed a report which outlined transfer issues and provided a series of recommendations. The Engineering Technology Task Group reviewed transferability between Engineering Technology diploma programs and Engineering degree programs.

Work will continue with stakeholders in both discisplines to enhance learner pathways.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Implementation of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's (AET) *Advancing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Alberta: an Action Plan* is in progress. The completed environmental scan provided a clear outlook on the state of PLAR in the province. A PLAR Stakeholder Committee was struck and three productive meetings have been held. Two workshops and four distance courses on a variety of PLAR related topics were offered to institution faculty and staff, and also to Community Adult Learning Center staff. In addition, standard PLAR-related terminology and definitions have been developed, and a new policy statement for reporting PLAR credits through the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System has been approved within AET.

National Leadership

As a leader in admissions and transfer, ACAT continues to promote the excellence of Alberta's Transfer System, recognize student mobility, and continues to work with other jurisdictions in Canada through participation in bodies such as the Council of Ministers of Education Canada Working Group on Credit Transfer, the Western Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT).

ACAT participated in the PCCAT Annual General

ACAT Strategic Direction 2009 - 2010

Meeting in June, 2009 in Fredericton, New Brunswick. At the 2009 meeting, ACAT Chair, Mr. Ron Woodward, was nominated as the incoming Western Co-Chair of PCCAT.

ACAT is participating in the completion of the PCCAT student mobility research project which examines student mobility at a number of universities across Canada. Additionally, ACAT is participating in a WestCAT research project examining interprovincial transfer arrangements between institutions in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Also in support of interprovincial transfer, Council adopted a British Columbia Institution Policy allowing degree granting members of the British Columbia Transfer System to apply for membership within the Alberta Transfer System.

Goals and Accomplishments

Core Business One
Admission

Admission practices and policies at post-secondary institutions are clearly articulated.

Goal 1 Facilitate the development and maintenance of fair and equitable admission practices and policies at post-secondary institutions.

Outcomes

1.1 Students make smooth transitions from secondary to post-secondary and post-secondary to post-secondary studies.

1.2 Students have improved access to information on admission policies at institutions.

Accomplishments

Outcome 1.1

- Continued to work with the secondary to post-secondary Mathematics and Second Languages articulation committees.
- Reviewed articulation model in Alberta and other jurisdictions and developed a new model in Alberta to support articulation committee expansion.
- Continued post-secondary to post-secondary articulation meetings in Computing Science, Biological Sciences and Engineering.
- Continued to consult with the Provincial Academic Upgrading Coordinators and published charts outlining acceptance of upgrading courses for admission to post-secondary programs.

Outcome 1.2

- Strategic work with Institutions will continue in 2010-2011 year.
- Transfer Alberta launch provides learners access to admissions information on the ALIS website.

Goals and Accomplishments

Core Business Two *Transfer*

Facilitate agreements among post-secondary institutions to acknowledge and recognize appropriate previous learning experience.

Goal 2 Learners receive appropriate educational credit as they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Outcomes

2.1 The student transfer system is effective and efficient.

2.2 Capacity for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is increased in the publicly funded post-secondary institutions.

Accomplishments

Outcome 2.1

- Updated the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide* daily and published the hard copy *Alberta Transfer Guide*, pursuant to consultations with Alberta Transfer System members about the need for an ongoing hard copy guide.
- Witnessed the number of active transfer agreements grow to 29,828 and grandfathered to 45,743 with the total number of agreements now reaching 75,571 and representing an 11% increase.
- Worked with Ministry representatives concerning the development of the Graduate Outcomes Survey specific to 2007 - 2008 transfer graduates.
- Provided training and orientation sessions to post-secondary institution representatives.
- Worked with Information and Technology Management representatives concerning performance and functionality of the ACAT Transfer Agreement Archival and Retrieval System (TAARS).
- Learner Progression Best Practices Research Project completed and Final Report provided.
- Alberta "Members in good Standing" reports were provided to ACAT's 36 member institutions in 2009.

Outcome 2.2

- Met with key administrators, faculty, and staff at the 19 Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions, Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions, Comprehensive Community Institutions, and Polytechnical Institutions to gather data for an environmental scan. This resulted in a report called *PLAR Action Plan: Report on Institution Visits*.
- Identified and drew together a diverse group of members to sit on the PLAR Stakeholder Committee. Three meetings have been held.
- Contracted the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) to develop and deliver two workshops, *Introduction to PLAR/RPL* and *Developing Authentic Assessments for RPL*, targeted for our Alberta audience.
- Funded post-secondary institution and Canadian Adult Learning Council faculty and staff to complete in four distance courses included in SIAST's *Recognition of Prior Learning Practitioner* program.

Goals and Accomplishments

Core Business Two (cont'd)
Transfer

Facilitate agreements among post-secondary institutions to acknowledge and recognize appropriate previous learning experience.

Goal 2 Learners receive appropriate educational credit as they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Outcomes

2.1 The student transfer system is effective and efficient.

2.2 Capacity for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is increased in the publicly funded post-secondary institutions.

Accomplishments (cont'd)

Outcome 2.2 (cont'd)

- Researched and developed a *Recognition of Prior Learning* terms and definitions document to encourage the use of standardized terminology across Alberta's advanced education system.
- Developed a new policy statement for reporting PLAR credits through the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System. The policy has been approved and will allow institutions to include PLAR credits in their annual enrolment totals.
- A communications plan has been developed and communication about PLAR within the advanced education system has occurred and is ongoing.

Goals and Accomplishments

Core Business Three
Communication

Ensure that learners and other stakeholders have timely and accurate information about institutions' admission requirements and course and program transfer options.

Goal 3

Learners have access to current, accurate information on admissions and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities, and are aware of the benefits of the admissions and transfer system.

Outcomes

3.1 Information to assist high school and potential transfer students is available.

3.2 Albertans are aware of the benefits of our admissions and transfer system.

Accomplishments

Outcome 3.1

- Continued to work with post-secondary institutional partners to annually compile all transfer agreements within the *On-Line Alberta Transfer Guide* and the *Alberta Transfer Guide.*
- Promoted the *Alberta Transfer Guide* through the *Learning Clicks* program and promotion at conferences.
- Worked with the keepers of the *Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS website)* as a portal to www.transferalberta.ca.
- Continued to provide the Transfer Infoline services to learners and institutions by responding to approximately 211 email and telephone inquiries.

Outcome 3.2

- Delivered presentations to various groups including Learning Clicks Youth and Parent Ambassadors, Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), Alberta Student's Executive Council (ASEC) members.

Goals and Accomplishments

Core Business Four
Influence

Influence policy related to admissions and transfer issues including: assisting and advising other jurisdictions about the procedures for and benefits of establishing and maintaining an efficient and effective admissions and transfer system; and providing a forum for inter-institutional discussion of admissions and transfer issues.

Goal 4 ACAT influences policy decisions related to the admissions and transfer system and serves as a model for other jurisdictions.

Outcomes

4.1 ACAT demonstrates a leadership role in enhancing the concept of Campus Alberta while at the same time ensuring that a learner-centred approach is at the forefront.

4.2 Reinforce ACAT as the representative voice in policy development for the advanced education system on items related to Alberta admissions and transfer.

4.3 Provide advice and assistance to promote inter-provincial portability of courses and programs.

Accomplishments

Outcome 4.1

- ACAT competency governance model finalized and adopted.
- Mandate and Roles Document developed in aligning ACAT with the pending Alberta Public Governance Agencies Act proving enhanced leadership to Campus Alberta.
- ACAT Code of Conduct developed and adopted by Council aligning with Campus Alberta and the pending Alberta Public Governance Agencies Act.
- Facilitated Nursing and Engineering Technology Task Groups work and provided reports to the Minister with their recommendations on program transferability.
- Initiated work addressing transfer issues such as instructor qualifications.

Outcome 4.2

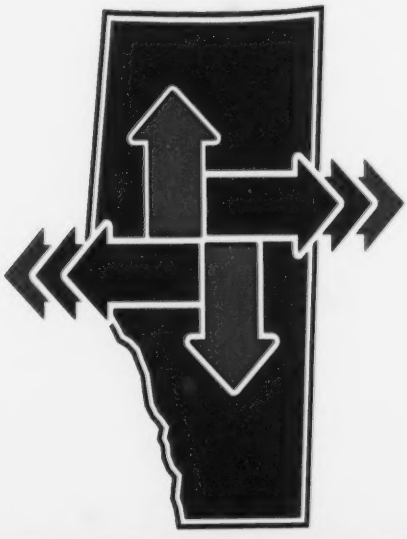
- Continued to provide an opportunity for round-table discussions of institutional issues at ACAT meetings.
- Invited the host institution for ACAT meetings to participate and discuss admissions and transfer issues at their institution.
- Coordinated the annual Contact Persons' meeting where 60 institution and ACAT representatives dialogued about key transfer issues, and identified opportunities for continuous improvement. Dr. Frank Gelin, Executive Director and Co-Chair, British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), attended as a guest speaker and provided a presentation on the changing face of transfer.
- ACAT Chair visited 11 member institutions to discuss issues, opportunities, and challenges.

Goals and Accomplishments

Outcome 4.3

- ATAC Manager attended the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer Articulation chair and Contact Persons conference.
- Adopted British Columbia Institution policy allowing degree granting institutions from British Columbia to apply for membership in the Alberta Transfer System and circulated it to members of the Alberta Transfer System.
- Participating in PCCAT national student mobility research project.
- Committed to Western Consortium on Admissions and Transfer interprovincial research project.
- ACAT Chair, Director and Manager attended the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Fredericton, New Brunswick June 2009.
- ACAT Chair accepted nomination as the incoming 2010 PCCAT Western Co-Chair at this AGM.
- Supported a culture of interprovincial transfer by chairing the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group (ACAT Director) and by participating in the PCCAT and WestCAT research projects

Notes



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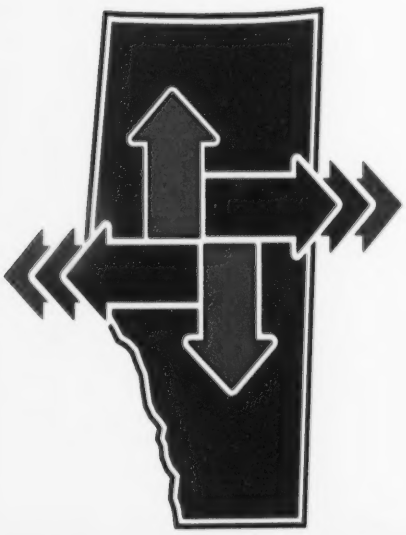

ALBERTA TRANSFER SYSTEM CONTACTS

Post-secondary Institution	Telephone	Website
Alberta College of Art + Design	1-800-251-8290	www.acad.ca
Ambrose University College	1-800-461-1222	www.ambrose.edu
Athabasca University	1-800-788-9041	www.athabascau.ca
Aurora College	1-866-266-4966	www.auroracollege.nt.ca
The Banff Centre	1-800-565-9989	www.banff centre.ca
Blue Quills First Nations College	1-888- 645-4455	www.bluequills.ca
Bow Valley College	1-866-428-2669	www.bowvalleycollege.ca
Canadian University College	1-800-661-8129	www.cauc.ca
Concordia University College of Alberta	1-866-479-5200	www.concordia.ab.ca
DeVry Institute of Technology – Calgary	1-800-363-5558	www.devry.edu/calgary
Grande Prairie Regional College	1-888-539-4772	www.gprc.ab.ca
Grant MacEwan University	1-888-497-4622	www.macewan.ca
Keyano College	1-800-251-1408	www.keyano.ca
The King's University College	1-800-661-8582	www.kingsu.ca
Lakeland College	1-800-661-6490	www.lakelandcollege.ca
Lethbridge College	1-800-572-0103	www.lethbridgecollege.ca
Maskwachees Cultural College	(780) 585-3925	www.maskwachees.ca
Medicine Hat College	(403) 529-3819	www.mhc.ab.ca
Mount Royal University	(403) 440-5000	www.mtroyal.ca
NorQuest College	(780) 644-6000	www.norquest.ca
NAIT	(780) 471-6248	www.nait.ca
Northern Lakes College	1-866-652-3456	www.northernlakescollege.ca
Nunavut Arctic College	1-866-979-7222	www.nac.nu.ca
Olds College	1-800-661-6537	www.oldscollege.ca
Portage College	1-866-623-5551	www.portagecollege.ca
Prairie Bible College	1-800-661-2425	www.prairie.edu
Red Crow Community College	1-866-937-2400	www.redcrowcollege.com
Red Deer College	(403) 342-3300	www.rdc.ab.ca
Rocky Mountain College	1-877-968-6762	www.rockymountaincollege.ca
SAIT Polytechnic	1-877-284-7248	www.sait.ca
St. Mary's University College	(403) 531-9130	www.stmu.ab.ca
Taylor College & Seminary	1-800-567-4988	www.taylor-edu.ca
University of Alberta	(780) 492-3113	www.ualberta.ca
University of Calgary	(403) 210-7625	www.ucalgary.ca
University of Lethbridge	(403) 320-5700	www.uleth.ca
Yellowhead Tribal College	1-877-982-3382	www.ytced.ab.ca